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Committee for Programme and Coordination
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Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-seventh session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: programme planning

(Item 4 (a))

Experience gained in the planning and budgeting process

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 12 June 2007, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Secretary-General on experience gained in the planning and budgeting process (A/62/81).

2. A representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The view was expressed that the report provided detailed background information on the planning and budgeting process. However, it was also noted that a more comprehensive report outlining the difficulties in the process had been expected. General satisfaction was expressed with the efforts to improve the United Nations planning and budgeting process. It was recognized that while progress had been made, there was still room for improvement, and special attention should be given to the formulation of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. It was noted that the relationship between objectives, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and outputs should be strengthened and improved.

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4. Support was expressed for continuing to use the strategic framework as the main planning tool. Support was also expressed for continuing to include part one: plan outline. It was pointed out that in addition to continuing or not continuing to include the plan outline, a third option existed, which was to improve it. It was indicated that such improvement should include closer linkage to the eight priorities of the United Nations. It was noted that part one was important to the cycle in order to capture long-term objectives, particularly in view of the reduced two-year plan period. It was noted that the difficulties encountered in agreeing on a plan outline were not always related to disagreement among Member States on long-term targets, but rather problems relating to the interpretation of the priorities in formulating plan proposals.

5. The view was expressed that the benchmarking framework proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit and endorsed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the General Assembly was a useful tool for the Secretary-General and the oversight bodies to measure progress towards the effective implementation of results-based management in the United Nations.

6. The view was expressed that General Assembly resolution 58/269 did not change the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and did not eliminate its responsibility for analysing the programmatic aspects of the budget. Furthermore, it was noted that the responsibility of the Committee to review the programmatic aspects of the budget should not be eliminated. Support was expressed for continuation of the role of the Committee in the planning process and in the review of programme narratives to ensure consistency between the biennial programme plan and the programmatic aspects of the budget. It was noted that the division of labour between the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should remain unchanged. It was pointed out that Member States needed to receive complete information in order to make decisions.

7. Support was expressed for strengthening monitoring and evaluation in the programme planning cycle. It was noted that programmes that were funded primarily from extrabudgetary sources tended to address the allocation of resources for monitoring and evaluation better, and that regular budget programmes needed to allocate resources to monitoring and evaluation activities. It was also noted that there was not a clear rationale in the report for the need to train senior staff on budgeting, planning and evaluation.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recalled paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 58/269, whereby the Assembly decided to review, with a view to taking a final decision at its sixty-second session, the format, content and duration of the strategic framework, including on the necessity of maintaining part one, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, reviewing the experiences gained with the changes made in the planning and budgeting process.**

9. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Decide to maintain the strategic framework as the principal policy directive of the United Nations, which serves as the basis for programme**

planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, with effect from the biennium 2010-2011;

(b) Decide to continue to include part one: plan outline in the strategic framework;

(c) Request the Secretary-General to improve the format of part one and the reflection of the longer-term objectives therein by, inter alia, elaborating on the priorities of the United Nations agreed to by the Member States, in accordance with resolutions 61/235 and 59/275;

(d) Reaffirm that the Committee for Programme and Coordination shall, in performing its programmatic role in the planning and budgeting process, continue to review the programmatic aspects of the new and/or revised mandates approved subsequent to the adoption of the biennial programme plan, as well as any differences that may arise between the biennial programme plan and the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget, in accordance with its terms of reference, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(e) Decide that the Committee for Programme and Coordination shall continue to perform its role in reviewing the strategic framework;

(f) Decide that the programme narratives of the programme budget fascicles shall be identical to those in the biennial programme plan and request the Secretary-General to ensure full compliance;

(g) Request the Secretary-General to submit a report, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, on new and/or revised mandates that the General Assembly has approved subsequent to the adoption of the biennial programme plan;

(h) Request the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities;

(i) Request the Secretary-General to ensure that training on the programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation cycle be fully integrated as part of the Organization's training programme and included in any orientation courses for senior managers;

(j) Stress that setting the priorities of the United Nations is the prerogative of the Member States, as reflected in legislative mandates.

10. The Committee for Programme and Coordination was of the view that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in accordance with its mandate, should continue to review the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget outline and the administrative and budgetary matters related to the proposed biennial programme budgets.

11. The Committee regretted that the reports requested by the General Assembly in paragraphs 14 and 15 of its resolution 60/257 and paragraph 17 of its resolution 61/235 were not issued for consideration at its forty-seventh session.